DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 026 022 HE 000 442

By-Howard, Laurence C.

Graduate Education for the 'Disadvantaged' and Black-Oriented University Graduates.

Council of Graduate Schools in the U.S., Washington, D.C.
Pub Date 18 Dec 68
Note-15p.; Paper presented to the Council of Graduate Schools in the U.S., December 18, 1968.
EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.85
Descriptors-College Graduates, *Disadvantaged Youth, Educational Change, Educational Disadvantagement, Graduate Students, *Graduate Study, *Higher Education, *Minority Groups, Negro Institutions, *Negro Students

It has been estimated that a total of 1200 to 1500 Negroes have received Ph.Ds in the US, which is approximately the number of degrees awarded ANNUALLY to white students. In 1966 the Danforth Foundation financed experimental graduate programs at 4 white universities for disadvantaged Negro and other minority group students. An evaluation of the first year's efforts reveals that (1) there is a large number of disadvantaged students at the graduate level, but white institutions would not welcome a majority of minority group students on campus, (2) although the students would not have met traditional admission requirements, they were not significantly deficient, (3) more than 80% of the students performed at a respectable academic level, (4) the programs have not directly influenced change on the 4 campuses, and (5) some participating black students are not satisfied with the quality of education they are receiving. It is felt that white institutions should change the compensatory approach to graduate-level instruction for minority groups from one of white orientation to one which utilizes the black experience as an educational resource. Black-oriented programs would focus on historical and cultural events concerning black, white, rich and poor people, and, to balance current emphases on Western Europe, studies would be included on Latin America, Africa and Asia. These programs should also be established at all predominantly Negro institutions to supplement current efforts to produce more minority group professors. (WM)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

[Lawrence C.]

H

12/18/68

ED026022

GRADUATE EDUCATION FOR THE 'DISADVANTAGED' AND BLACK-ORIENTED UNIVERSITY GRADUATES

Introduction

This statement is a case against conducting educational opportunities programs at the graduate level for the 'disadvantaged' only at white universities. Needed instead, in this view, is major financial support for black-oriented graduate schools to permit them to attract substantial number of students and scholars of the highest potential. Black-oriented graduate schools could arise at either predominantly Negro, or at white universities. The black orientation would involve making full use of the black experience as an educational resource rather than inadvertently striving to assimilate black Americans into a white culture. For reasons mentioned later, I expect that a black orientation will develop only where black students and black faculty form a large and significant nucleus of the graduate school.*

The students of highest potential for whom the black-oriented curriculum would be most attractive are those who will take joy in learning in a multi-dimensional color, class and continent setting, those who want to live in a truly integrated world.

O HE 000 414

* Twelve white universities had more than 100 black Americans as graduate students in 1968. Twelve institutions, perhaps the same ones, report having graduated ten or more Black Ph.Ds in the last five years. One institution has awarded over 40 such degrees since 1963. (See Fred E. Crossland, "Graduate Education and Black Americans," Ford Foundation, November 25, 1968.)

A black-oriented graduate level expanding opportunities program would place emphasis on building Ph.D programs at those institutions where black students are already enrolled in large numbers. With minor exceptions, that means concentrating on a few traditionally Negro institutions in the South. But more than a shift of institutions, this would be a shift from white to black categories of thought.

The sharpness of this departure stands out in the contrasting ideological foundations. Present white university-based programs of graduate education for the 'disadvantaged' rest on two interrelated beliefs:

1. The belief that the 'disadvantaged' students are primarily Negroes or members of minority groups - Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans in continental United States, or American Indians, who are not in graduate schools to the extent that they should be because their groups face economic and social handicaps - the consequence of continuing patterns of discrimination and segregation in American life. Disadvantaged students are thought to require compensatory help.

2. The belief that black discontent, especially in the cities, requires a response by responsible institutions in American life. The appropriate response for graduate schools is to help by increasing their institutional capacity to take in larger numbers of 'disadvantaged' students.

On the black-oriented approach, this faith in compensation is replaced by the conviction that the black experience is a resource to be husbanded to help a floundering America find a humane and relevant future.

Black-oriented universities are anxious to award Ph.D degrees in order to provide Black Americans with the legitimation to play a full role in credential-clogged institutions. What Blacks have to contribute arises from their human identity and social experience in addition to - and often more important than - formal academic training. Blacks are a resource for America

because they have been dispossessed.

But since a workable program probably lies between these ideological extremes, this recommendation is not to abandon the efforts of white universities to help, neither it is a rejection of white efforts to change de facto segregation in American graduate education. This statement, instead, only urges a shift in emphasis to include black experience as another valid orientation, one not just to be tolerated, but to be celebrated, and institutionalized in new Ph.D programs at black-oriented universities.

This perspective grows out of my personal interpretation of the Danforth Foundation's rather extensive work in the equal educational opportunity field. Let me underline that these are my personal views, I do not, and could not, speak for the Danforth Foundation. I want to first outline the Danforth program and what it attempts to accomplish. Secondly, I will say a few things of an evaluative nature about what the specific experience with graduate programs for the 'disadvantaged' suggests. Finally, I would like to return to often repeated Danforth Foundation priorities:

1. The search for ways to focus on students and professors as persons.
2. The search for ways to serve first the unserved, and to be responsive to changing conditions by emphasing human values.
3. The search for new frontiers which gives promise of racial, class and national reconciliation.

Students, the personal dimension in education, and promoting liberal education are the historic commitments of the Danforth Foundation. To continue to fulfill these objectives, it is possible that new opportunities must be sought through support to black-oriented institutions in addition to continued

support going to white higher education.

The DF Program for Disadvantaged Graduate Students

Danforth interest in 'disadvantaged' graduate students starts from the Foundation's historic involvement in promoting equal educational opportunity for all. The Foundation contributed substantially to the achievement of accreditation by predominantly Negro colleges when the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools put aside its dual system for the South. Over the years, the Foundation has financed compensatory education programs from pre-school through graduate and professional education. The largest single grant in the Foundation's history, $5 million, went to a consortium of white southern universities to create the Southern Fellowship Fund - a program to increase the supply of terminal degree holders, black or white, on the faculties of predominantly Negro colleges. The work of the Foundation has been varied and extensive,but with minor exception, funds have gone only to white institutions.*

The program for 'disadvantaged' graduate students is part of this work for equal opportunity. In the spring of 1965, it became clear that Negroes. and other minority group students, were in graduate schools only in tiny and proportionately dwindling numbers. There was some evidence that fellowship

*One outstanding exception has been support given to Morehouse College.

programs administered by national agencies had selection biases favoring students with traditional middle class backgrounds. It was said that of 10,000 Ph.Ds being awarded annually, only 50 or so went to Negroes, and perhaps fewer than 3% to persons, from 'poor' rural areas, whose baccalaureate were from 'weak' colleges. The Foundation was personally aware of this problem as only a few Negroes or other minority group students had ever received Danforth Fellowships.

It also was clear at that time that the Council of Graduate Schools wanted to do something about this problem. The 1963 national meeting of the Council was focused on this topic. Several graduate deans developed plans to extend opportunities to the 'disadvantaged' student: Vanderbilt was ready to address itself to the mid-South, Tulane to the deep South, Duke, Berkeley, Emory, Columbia, Yale, Wisconsin and Pittsburgh all had fairly firm plans. It was indicated that financial support would enable the rapid development of these programs.

In this context, the Danforth program came into existence. It was help for graduate schools to allow them to identify and develop the talent of persons whose social, economic and educational background places them at a disadvantage in the competition for opportunities to take-up graduate study. This action reflected the conventional beliefs that there were disadvantaged students at the graduate level, and that the quality graduate departments in white universities should do something about it. It was also expected that participating graduate schools would profit, and particularly they would

learn how to modify their practices in recruitment and selection. Larger increments of 'disadvantaged' students, it was also felt, would enrich their "mix" and thus improve the education of the regular faculty and students. Finally, while it was expected that the preponderance of student participants would be Negroes, this was not a program for Negroes only.

Beginning in late 1966, four experimental programs were funded: The University of California at Los Angeles, the University of Cincinnati, Vanderbilt University, and the University of Wisconsin. In addition, the Foundation granted $5 million to the Council of Southern Universities to enable them to identify promising students going on for the Ph.D who have interest in returning to a teaching career at a predominantly Negro college.

The First Year Appraisal

The experience of one year contains a few suggestive ideas only because all four university-based programs have turned-up common themes. Five tentative observations can be advanced.

1. The number of minority group students with limited incomes who can profit from this kind of program is large, and they can be identified with comparative ease.

All of the programs were quickly filled. Each of these universities could use considerably larger funds. It appears equally prominent - as an unstated finding - that none of these institutions desires a majority of 'disadvantaged' students.

2. The need for special academic undergirding: transitional years, summer workshops, remedial courses, tutorial assistance, special academic accomodation, has been limited.

While it varies by school and academic discipline, these students do not appear to be significantly deficient academically despite the fact that most of them would have been considered inadmissible. There is no significant data supporting general notions about 'weak' colleges or the poor quality of preparation at predominantly Negro colleges. More relevant, little attention has been given to the undergraduate preparation as the student's "staying power" appears more a function of economic support and a personalized orientation toward graduate education than of academic preparation. It also appears that these four institutions were not equipped to respond to the personal and affective needs of these students. This is not to suggest that special aids, like help in statistical techniques, computer programming, speed reading were inappropriate - but that the assumed need for cultural assimilation and the implicit noblese oblige were disfuntional. For the needed non-academic support, a heavy reliance has been placed upon other members of these same minority groups, that is on resources that were not in these graduate schools, and which in the category of possible candidates, was an implied mark of being disadvantaged.

3. Participating students have demonstrated that they can do MA graduate work at a respectable academic level.

The most striking finding, given the ideological foundation of these programs, is that these 'disadvantaged' students are succeeding. More than 80% are expected to complete their MA degrees, many on schedule. This

completion rate is said to be significantly higher than that achieved by the 'non-disadvantaged' enrollment. This finding properly suggests that credit is due to these graduate schools, but it also says something about the students themselves. Some will go on to Ph.Ds under regular institutional programs.

4. Very little change has come to these graduate schools which can be attributed to these programs.

This finding is debatable, for each of these schools has changed during the past year. But so too have graduate schools changed with respect to black students, that have had no such programs. Nor is there much evidence that the experience at these four schools is shifting to other institutions. Black Student Unions, in open revolt across American, seem a much more potent force for change, and these students have not pointed to compensatory education as the best line of progress.

5. There is evidence that some black students in these programs are dissatisfied with the quality of the education they are receiving.

This disenchantment mirrors feelings by students generally, but particularly by black students in white institutions. The strongest arguments one hears against continuing to focus equal educational opportunity for Negroes in white graduate schools only - comes from black students who know white graduate education best. More than a hundred white institutions this year have acceded to demands to add black professors and curriculum reflecting the black experience to their offerings. Almost without exception these white institutions have agreed that these additions are highly desirable.

These finding, and particularly the growing black-consciousness of students, makes necessary, in my opinion, a review of efforts in this area. One might ask: have past efforts retained enough of the Danforth mission to highlight the personal dimension? Are the right students and institutions being responded to in order to emphasize humane values? Are these programs truly innovative? The answer to all three questions, at least partially, seems in the negative. A moratorium in making grants in this area is now in effect. It affords the chance to probe such questions more deeply.

Graduate Education at Black-Oriented Universities

Work with black-oriented universities could provide meaningful supplement to what is now being done with minority group students at the graduate level. These initial grants have brought out gaps that need filling. The need to more rapidly increase the supply of black Ph.D holders remains. While attention has focused on places where there were practically no Negro graduate students, there is no reason to avoid places that are now awarding large number of MA degrees to black students. Finally, the opportunities for substantive innovation are perhaps greater in aspiring black-oriented institutions than they are in the more prestigious graduate schools in the country.

From what has been learned this past year, there are serious gaps in the present approach which programs at black-oriented universities must fill.

1. There are far more students to be served than are now being served.

The process of change in recruitment and admission in the white graduate schools is established. It cannot be expected to make the needed difference because programs for the 'disadvantaged' are regarded as service efforts incidental to central academic concerns. It is not surprising that change has come slowly, and that less than 300 out of 40,000 Ph.Ds awarded in the last five years have gone to Black Americans.

2. The compensatory education approach is not appropriate for many black students. Instead, they may require the feeling that they have a significant contribution to make to scholarship and to the reconstituting of American society.

The Coleman Report has already provided considerable evidence at the elementary and secondary levels, that compensatory education is only one approach, and not always the most effective for all students.In contrast, the student's positive sense of his own future opportunities does have a high correlation with academic success. The findings of the Coleman Report may well be applicable for higher education as well. Just as community-based elementary schools are felt to have a place within public school education, so, too, the black-oriented university may be particularly well suited for supplying positive reinforcement for those students who can make constructive use of this support.

3. It is possible that fifth year, and other programs for the 'disadvantaged', compete destructively with predominantly Negro MA programs for students and add to the drain of the black professorate out of Negro higher education.

To the extent that it would be possible, some of these opportunity programs should be designed to function as reinforcement to Negro undergraduate institutions. Strong black-oriented graduate instruction at a predominantly Negro institution would provide powerful support for undergraduate instruction at that institution

H

and would improve that institution's ability to hold its best faculty and students.

4. These special projects do not add up to nearly enough output in students with terminal degrees, they do not meet the needed research on the black American subculture, nor do they provide enough service programs aimed at the low income and black community.

The significant gap is that present programs focus upon individuals and do not result in the multiple pay-offs that a graduate school oriented toward blacks would offer. The nation's need for black terminal degree holders is exceedingly great. It has been estimated that only 1200 to 1500 Negroes have received the Ph.D in America's history - about the number of degrees awarded to whites in any one year. Yet, resources for these 'disadvantaged graduate school' programs have not gone for Ph.D candidates, all have been to expand MA holders. This seems particularly a gap since in 1968 there were nearly 1400 MA degrees awarded to blacks in 20 predominantly Negro colleges. Had a sum equal to that spent in white universities been spent to establish several Ph.D Programs for MA holders at black-oriented universities, the supply of black terminal degree holders would have been substantially increased. Of far greater importance, these institutions would have developed the capacity to continue Ph.D production into the future.

Promoting graduate programs at black-oriented universities is attractive for many of the reasons that supporting 'disadvantaged' students in white universities is unattractive:

-The basis is a positive, not a pejorative view of the student, and a productive, not a paternalistic motivation.

- It means assisting people to assist themselves.
- It would building upon what these students are, where they are, and what they want.

Moving beyond America's historic myopia, or dilemma, needed is a shift from well worked white educational categories to black-oriented innovations.

Ph.D programs at black universities could be highly innovated. Not too much is known about what a black orientation would entail, although, many of its facets are suggested by the growing number of terms that have entered popular usage in the youth culture, negritude and oh naturale. soul and spirituals the African personality, Pan Africanism, black consciousness, the black experience. In contrast, white views of Negroes are too well known: disadvantaged and deprived, ghetto and immediate gratification, the negative self-image. Black-oriented graduate programs would sift through the black experience in search for a firm understanding of what black consciousness involves for black and non-black Americans. Black-oriented study would have meaning to some black students for it would be the self-conscious study of the black experience. I suggest this perspective would be attractive to many non-black students as well.

Such a focus will occur first, at those places where there is a significant nucleus of black students, black intellectuals and black activists in contact with the black masses - the dispossessed not only in America but around the world. White universities, faculty or students, are increasingly unwelcome in low income inner city areas of America where blacks

now reside in increasing numbers. Unfortunately, white universities are increasingly less welcome in the world beyond the West abroad. The nucleus of black students, professors, artists and intellectuals, still retain access to the dispossessed masses here and abroad. As the world shrinks, and the West grows progressively more isolated, the importance of black-oriented universities increases in its world-wide significance.

The work of neither the four universities discussed above, nor the Southern Fellowship Fund, would be duplicated by a black-oriented university program. So far, no institution of higher education has been encouraged to celebrate the black experience.

Since charges of chauvinism will certainly come, the black-oriented university will have to respond to the charge of being separatist. This charge may be best answered by working through what is likely to be the academic agenda of a black-oriented university. Some outlines of this agenda have already appeared. I have suggested elsewhere

> In the first place, it would have a comparative perspective; that is, it would compare the historical and cultural experiences of the poor with the affluent, the black with the white. It would strive to locate the American experience in the world experience. Heave emphasis would be placed upon those parts of the world which have received little attention in American education - Latin America, Africa and Asia - as a balance to our present preoccupation with Western Europe. The experiences of the outsider, of the exploited and marginal groups would be compared with the experiences of those who have had and exercised power.
>
> The black conscious college would be heavily engaged in service. To reverse patterns of exploitation, it would make its resources available to others whose needs were not just obvious and neglected, but whose very experience of being constrained would give promise of heightened human sensitivity. This learning through service would be oriented

toward the inner cities and remote regions in America, and the world in order to draw inspiration and insight. In contrast, the service to established centers of power and prestige would be geared to modifying the practices of racism and class exploitation found there.

These colleges would be havens for those who are critics of the systems as it restricts human growth. They would support those who seek to dehumanize man through technological, religious, racial, or economic means. Academic freedom would be a cloak of protection to be spread over individuals who are striving to alter institutions, critics who espouse ideas which threaten entrenched power. In essence, these institutions are seen as having a humanitas point of view. They are more oriented toward promoting productive human relations than toward improving products or assuring profits. They are not designed to turn out a managerial class, but to bring their graduates more closely into the life of human communities.

Just as the boundaries between these institutions and their immediate neighborhoods would be blurred, so too would the line between county and country be indistinct, as they would strive to break out of any nationalistic "box." *

Dr. W.E.B. DuBois foreshadowed the scholarly preoccupation of such an institution when he was first at Atlanta University. He launched Phylon: a Journal of Race and Culture and turned out 19 volumes of source material through the Atlanta Conferences held between 1897 and 1910. The Slaughter Collection, 34 Afro-American and Third World Course at Atlanta University exists now, and the coming Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Center, with its Library, Freedom Museum, and Institute for advanced Afro-American Studies, spell out further lines of development a black-oriented university might take. DuBois wrote in 1942:

> "It is...illogical...that the chief studies of the Negro's condition today are not being done by Negroes and Negro colleges. The center of gravity as well as the truth of investigations, should be brought

* "Black Consciousness and Higher Education", An occasional paper published by The Church Society for College Work.

> back to the control of an association of Negro colleges; and this not for the purpose of creating a Negro science, or purely racial facts; but in order to make sure that the whole undistorted picture is there, and that the complete interpretation is made by those most competent to do it through their lives and training."

This is a call for black-oriented university graduates. Substantial financial support to the few institutions, with a nucleus of students and faculty committed to scholarly action, could mean that substantial numbers of graduate students of the highest caliber would be attracted. In these institutions the multi-dimensional life in color, class and continent would be celebrated together.